

HARI MANDIR

Waheguru's Abode Sikh Bait-Ul-Haraam

By : Giani BRAHMA SINGH "BRAHMA," Ajmer

During my deep study of Tadrax-ul-Aulia—Qassas-e-Aulia, Bible, the old Testament—particularly its first five chapters—The—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, known as Tohra (Toreit) and Holy Qura'n, a thought flashed unto me that there was a specific divine purpose in the edification of Hari Mandir (Allah's House) by the Sikh Gurus, the men of Peace and Faith and great visionaries of the age, to ensconce the holy Sikh Scripture—The Pothi Sahib—later Guru Granth Sahib, under compilation by Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606 A.D.), the fifth Guru of the Sikh faith.

It was in the similitude of Hazrat Abraham son of Ezra of Ur, he an irrevocable iconclater, disowned by his son Abraham, a staunch iconoclast (Quran IX-114), descendant of Prophet Shem, the progeniture of the triad Juddism, Christianity and Islam and the eldest of the three sons of Prophet Noah—of deluge and Ark fame: tenth descendant of Adam—the First Man—moulded by Lord, Jehova from Admah (heb) clay breathing in it His breath, combination of Spirit and Energy; (Sanskrit)—Shiva and Shakti or Purush and Prakriti; founded Jerusalem in the worshipful memory of the Israel's God Salem, later to be placed in by his Tabernacle containing Ten Commandments—Tohra descended upon Moses and Zaboor—The Psalms (nineteenth chapter of Old Testament) descended on Hazrat Daoud respectively. Hazrat Abraham (Ibrahim for Islam) equally founded Kaaba in Mecca (the mother of villages—Qura'n VI-93) to house subsequently Al-Quran's descended on Hazrat Mohammad. Ezra is named Tohra in the Old Testament.

Tohra—Ten Commandments, had descended on Lord Moses (Moshe—Water born—Heb.) on Mount—Senai—Koh-e-Tur in the sacred valley of Twa (Qura'n XX-12) while holy Qura'n—"The best scripture which we have revealed the truth from the Lord—(Qura'n II 144) on Hazrat Mohammad during the night—*Loilt-ul-Qadr*—Night of Power, a night in the month of Ramadan—17th February 1610 A.D. on the cave of Hira, near the Holy city of Mecca.

As only chosen men were endowed by God with skill and wisdom for the construction of sacred buildings, the Sikh Guru Ram Das (1534-1581 A.D.) and Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606 A.D.) fourth and fifth successors of Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539 A.D.) founder of the Sikh religion, planned and founded a village namely, Chak Ram Das (after Guru Ram Das' name) and built a tank therein in the years 1577-1578 A.D. at the site of an extinct ancient pond, namely

Amar Kund and energizing it re-christened it Amritsar—the Pool of Amrit—elixir—*Aab e-Hewaa*, *Aab-e-Heyaat*, *Ma-ul-Heyyat*—Nectar or Som, a repetition of the mysterious law of nature and history" that sacred place is always a sacred place." Bearing on this Chak Ram Das also renamed Amritsar—the present city—in course of time growing into a seat of religious, cultural, economical and political power of the Sikh Nation.

And in the centre of this tank 500 feet long, 490 feet wide, 17 feet deep with thirteen steps, on all sides of the tank, with varying width, from 2 feet to 4 feet, Guru Arjan Dev had the foundation

brick of Hari Mandir laid by his spiritual friend Hazrat Mian Mir—Qadri Sufi saint of Lahore, on 14th, January, 1589 A.D., in advance, in the analogy of Prophet Abraham, to ensconce, the Sikh Scripture Pothi Sahib, a mystic poetic composition covering nearly a dozen and a half Aryan and Semetic languages and dialects in Punjabi—Gurmukhi (from the mouth of the Guru) characters—"Language of the folk (Quran xiv-4)—*Saadh-Bhaasha*—sung in 31 Shastric Raagas—Measures—by 42 divine contributors—Sikh Gurus, Hindu Bhaktas, Muslim Sufi dervishes, sans any discrimination of *Varna-Ashrama*—ranging from 12th to the 17th century. This is the Sikh *Qibla*—Ka'ba Jerusalem, Banaras, the first sanctuary and invincible place of worship for the peoples of this age—with ecumenicle scripture and unrestricted place of worship and reverence.

Hari Mandir was planned, founded and built in India when Islam—the faith of the Prophet of Arabia, was religiously and politically entrenched irrevocably in its soil with its esoteric wing Sufism, a counterpart of the Hindu Bhaktism, overtly and covertly, busy in *Tubligue*—spread of Islam. The Sufi dervishes sparing no pains to take advantage of the fluid social and political situations, to sow the seeds of disension and religious bigotry. The famous Hindu temples of Banaras, Muthura, Ayodhya, Budh Gaya, Tripiti, Somnath, Ujjain and Rameshwara etc., were shapped purely on ancient and Hindu religious and cultural notions with their deep and dark sanctum sanctorum—*Garbha-Grahas*—with only one low door-entrance—symbolising with Primordial

Darkness whence Om-Onkaar—Absolute—Hu—Vahu—manifested Himself at some beginningless point of time. This belief descended from Rig Veda and Tittreya Upanisjad—"In the begining of creation there was darkness hidden within the darknes." Manu Smiriti equally declared that "In the begining the universe existed in the shape of darkness."—*Tamabhutam*. In this darkness, the stone Deity Lingam made manifest in the dim light-Nebula—by the crafty Hindu priests-Brahmans—to keep up the unshaked good oldage faith of the devotees. The Semetic open-spaced places of worship for only one deity never existed then.

The Sikh Gurus painfully conscious of the widening gulf between the religious and cultural living of the rulers and the ruled—Islam and Kufr—were very restive to find out some positive ways and means wberewith to close or bridge the said gulf. To achieve this end Guru Nanak Dev perigenierated for nearly quarter of a century (1497-1521 A.D.), covering thousands of miles on foot, braving all physical and psychic hardships and hazards over mountains and oceans in India, West Asia and China delving deep into the Scriptures and canonical laws of all existing faiths, purely with this laudable aim. If one studies about 974 supernal hymns of Guru Nanak Dev enshrined in the Holy Sikh Scripture; (total about 5894), it becomes painfully evident of the quantum of anguish of that Vali Allah for bringing two bellicose faiths close to each other. Hinging on all this it was he-Guru Nanak Day, in the inception to leave instructions to his successor Gurus to provide or build some sanctuary whence Simran and Song—Zikr and Sama—Bhakti and Bhajan—may perennially reach the mankind sans any distinction of caste, creed add gender:

*Khatri, Brahman, Sod, Vaish
Updesh Chaun Varnan Ka
Sanjha* (A.G. 748)

Divine sermon sharable by all the four castes and wherein believers of all the faiths be admitted for reverence and worship with love unimpeded and the sacred hymn speaks:—

*Ray ray dagahay kahau na kou
Aao baitho aadan sabh dehoui.*
(A.G. 252)

"Avaunt: be-gone of this house

No one would say;
Come, be seated
All, respect would pay."

Allah and Frabrahma shall be attuned to all listener of heavenly music to swell their bosoms with love, devotion and worship and for *Isnaan* and *Wazda*—bath and ablution, one may have permanent and unimpeded supply of natural gift of transparent and pure water where *dadaar* and *baghla* frog and crane never showed their presence—the sign of the purity of the water.

And in witness thereof Guru Arjan Dev prayed:—

*Sa thaan bataavo meeta
Jithaty Hari keertan neeta.*
(A.G. 385)

Show me that place my Friend Where God's paeans are daily sung.

And Guru Arjan Dev, a super-eminant savant and scholar in both Aryan and Semetic traditions and lore, thus felt it expedient to associate both Islam and Hinduism rulers and the ruled, in the creation of such on *asthaan* holy nlace, focussing his divine vision on Guru Nanak Dev's teachings and Hazrat Mohammad's following revelation by *Allah Taala* :—

*La kay nil lazzimmat ko rabba-
hum lahum Gorofum minfi-
qiha Gorofum nub niyyutum
tajri minteholhul annharu
waada lahay la yukh loy ful
lahul me aad*—(Quran
XXXIX 20)

"But those—who keep their duty to their Lord, for them are lofty halls with lofty hall above them, built for them, beneath which rivers flow. It is a promise from Allah. Allah faileth not His promise. (Glorious Qura'n and *Gallan Paar Diaan*.)

And to bring down the prototype of *Arshi Mahal*, (portrayed in the Holy Qura'n) Heavenly Mansion Paradiasical Abode—*Swarg Dhaam*—*Sukhhavati*—meant for the denizens of Bahashat, on the face of this earth—*Farsh*—for the believers of all faiths, Guru Arjan Dev, thought no other better channel than to approach, his near at hand and revered by the Mughal Royalty, spiritual friend, Vali Allah Hazrat Mian Mir Qadri for the execution of his divine scheme.

To witness thereof, late Bhai Kapur Singh I.A.S. and National Professor of Sikhism writes in his booklet "The Golden Temple—Its theo-political status," published by Academy of Sikh Religion and Culture—Patiala, as under :—

"The Nanak V requested his great contemporary mystic and Muslim savant Mian Mir Mohammad Muayyinu'l Islam, popularly known as Mian Mir, to lay the foundation stones of this temple and this fact signifies in,

(Pothi Sahib) being the Covenant between the Gurus and their Sikhs.

On the beauty and glory of the sanctuary the writer says:— "No language can describe the glory of the scene present within the sanctuary. (Details omitted apprehending length—Scribe)

The Christianity believes that "Lord Jesus after his mundane sojourn became the first Head Priest of the Heavenly Temple where thousand thousand ministers unto him and ten thousand times thousand stand before him."

Lord Abraham on the completion of the Covenant, sang and danced in abundance of gratitude for the Lord. Guru Arjan Dev, equally, after the completion of the Hari Mandir sang in abandon:—

*Dithey sabhay thaan naheen
tadh jehaa
Budho Purukh bidhaatay taan
tou soheya.*

(A.G. 362)

All sacred places I have seen
None of they hold thy peer,
'Cause the Builder Divine hath
thee raised
Thou art of beauty loving and
rare.

As the ancient Prophets of Judaism, Abraham and Moses enjoined the divine privilege of personal encounter with their Lord God who imparted instructions for the benefit of the mankind, Guru Arjan Dev's Wabe-guru was equally munificent to lead him in person for the completion of the holy Tank and the Hari Mandir.

When the digging of the tank of Nectar-Amritsar—was in progress, one day Guru Arjan Dev observed one superbandsome male figure of symmetrical body, radiant countenance, fascinating eyes, broad forehead, and unearthly charm, digging the earth with spade in the right hand and holding the basket with the left hand. The earth so dug was helped by his companions and heaped on the Thra—mound—where the edifice of the Hari Mandir was planned to be raised. Guru Arjan Dev divined him to be *Purush Primordial*. Aad *Purukh*—God Almighty Himself appearing from His *Nirguna Swaroop*—Formless Body into His *Saugan Swaroop*—Human Personality—to assist His devotee's humanitarian cause. The other people doing the *Kaar-Sewa*—Labour of Love—also saw this strange figure and the unusual beautiful crowd around Him. In inquisitiveness they enquired of the Guru as to who was that mysteriously fascinating personality and the crowd around him, busy in *Kar-Sewa*. Guru Arjan Dev in his ecstatic frame of mind sang:—

*"Santaaen they kaaraj aap
khaloya*

*Hari-kam karavaan aayeya
Ram.*

(A.G. 783)

God Himself standeth by his
saints' works

He hath thus Himself come to
help in my job.

He is Hari Himself and has
come to assist in the job of *Kar-Sewa*
and the beautiful gathering
around Him are the devtas the
angels.

And to pay due obeisance to
this Divine Personality Guru
Arjan Dev moved forward to Him
where He was digging the earth
and in the utter state of ecstasy
wajd fell on His feet with tearful
eyes in gratitude. The Unearthly
Personality lifted up the Guru
and embraced him lovefully
and in the analogy of the Lord
God on the mount, gave Guru
Arjan Dev the following direc-
tions for the building of the Hari
Mandir, recorded in the words of
accredited poet theologian Bhai
Santokh Singh in his reputed "*Sci
Guru Pratap Suraj* :—

*Sar andar ab Sri Harimandir
Sirja, jiski rachna subder,
Jerah jwahr zaib baland
Sabhay bahou jim pooran-
chand (34)*

*Chahoun dis ko chahoun dar
sirjovoh
Ruehar bangla urdh kraavoh,
Ruehar bangla urdh kraavoh,
Pascham iskay setu rachayoh
Teerath teer paur banaavoh.*

(35)

*Sri Arjan kee pakray baanou
Beyant bataavat sabh jag
nachou,
Eh-mero Mandir bar hoeye
Jiskee samta karey na koeye.*

(36)

*Teen Lok mein hoeye na jaisa
Bhajan pratap baneye nit aisa,
Narak Nivaran kanran makh
Mero simran hoeye nirdakh.*

(37)

Now raise Harimandir in the
Holy Pond
Whose edifice shall be beauty
bound.

Bedecked, ornamented in lofty
form

Alluring look in full moon
charm (34).

Make four doors, one each
side,
Charming house over them
bide,

Lay a bridge on western side.
Steps on tank's four sides pro-
vide (35).

Lord of all worlds, holding Sri
Arjan's arm

Showed him fane's full design
and form,

This my Temple shall be so
rare

Peer thereof shall exist
nowhere (36).

Equal thereof shall not three
worlds show

Whence glorious songs shall
daily flow,

Saviour from Hades and salva-
tion cause

My simran be there sans hurt
and pause (37).

And I am prompted to believe
that it was the same theophenic
figure *Rabb*—Allah—Rama—Hari
Waheguru—God—whom Hazrat
Mohammad beheld and met on
Arsh-e-Barien—Seventh Heaven—
on the night of *Mairaj*—ascence
—from the holy Dome of Jeru-
salem Temple and whom he
described as:—

*"Wa ra aayato rubbi fi ahashe
saoretin*

*Wa ra aayato rubbi fi saoretin
shaabo marde qasam.*

I saw my Parvardgaar—Purve-
your—in the form of a
young boy without beard
and with curly hair (Hadith)
(Sakinat-ul-Aulia-pp-94).

The spot where Hari Himself
was digging the earth on the
completion of Hari Mandir
was named Hari-ki-Pauri—the
steps dedicated to Hari. This
place is sited outside the eastern
door of the sanctum sabcto. The
devotees take *charnamrit*—*pra-
saad*—sacranebt—a handfull water
from the holy tank, drink it, drip
it in their eyes and sprinkle in
their hair.

Golden Temple is a thing of
beauty, worthy of honour, love,
admiration and adoration. It is a
virgin draped in unfading golden
charm which human eyes, outer
and inner, can not help peering
at. Its mystifying fascination is
Benazir—unmatched—peerless. It
is a *darshan*—mirror reflecting
heritage of *Bhakti* and *Shakti*—
devotion and power—from Guru
Nanak Dev to Guru Gobind Singh.
I have witnessed with my own
eyes while a child, second decade
of the century, swarms of Tibiti
laamas with their families, draped
in wholly yak hide overalls, to
ward off the cold, encamping in
Guru-Ka-Bag, and open space
outside the Temple, where now
stand *Shiromani Gurdwara
Prabandbak Committee's office*
and *Guru-ka-Langar mansions*
come over the Himalayan range
to worship the Temple of
their Guru Rampoche—Guru
Nanak who illumined their lives
with his visits and teaching to
their Viharas—sanctauries. And
an English man, probably a
regular visitor to world sacred
places, described Hari Mandir in
his 'Guru Nanak' published in
A.D. 1839, as under:—

"The sight from the roof of
royal *boongas* is one of the most
imposing in the world. The wor-
ship of the heathens (here he
means non-Christians—Sikh) lies
before us in its glory. We have
stood on the tower of the Fort
Antonia at Jerusalem and tried to
conjur up the appearance of the
"Court of the Lord's House" in
the days of the splendour of the
Jewish heirarchy. From the roof

of the Parathenon we have
looked over the enclosures of
the Acropolis. But for neither
of these ancient Temples, not for
the great face of Diana (Roman
moon-Goddess) at Ephesus, can
we imagine a more venerably
brilliant appearance. Neither at
the time of Passover or the great
Panathenaic festival gathered the
thousands of worshippers within
the portals. (Passover—Annual
feast of the Jews to commemo-
rate the destroying angel passing
over the houses of Israelities when
he slew the first born of the
Egyptians.) Panathenaea—The
chief national festival of ancient
Athenes—the lesser held annually,
the greater every fourth year.) It
is a strange and solemn scene,
lofty minarets standing as senti-
nels on one side The umbragious
foliage of the frees sets the white
radiance of the marble and
maonery, the rich gilding of the
domes is reflected in waters:
pigeons without number fly over
the open space and from below
comes up a hum of the men and
women, bathing and praying and
making threefold circles of the
sanctuary, from the interior of
which comes forth the murmur of
priests chanting the sacred volume
to accompaniment of the stringed
instruments." (It shows Rabaab
and Sarangee were principal
instruments then. Harmonium
had no place for the Keertanias.
The occasion of the visit too
appears to be Baisakhi or Devaali.
(Scribe).

And an another keen observer
Baron Hugal, an Austrian Tourist
in 1835 A.D. in his mystification
writes in his "Hugal Travels in
Kashmir and Punjab":—

"All Indian temple have
something in them which appeals
forcibly to the imagination and
Hari Mandir is particularly mys-
terious and romantic in its char-
acter. It is surrounded by a golden
roof very beautifully and skillfully
contrived and is inlaid with
marbles, a large door of gold
opening into the temple which is
surrounded with little vestibules,
the ceiling being supported by
richly ornamented pillars; The
tuloo or pool struck me with
surprise—the water is as clear as
a mirror, a rare occurrence in such
places in India."

And why it is so mysteriously
marvellous about this Hari
Mandir? It is no mystry to find
because divine touch of two
Aulia-e-Din, Guru Arjan Dev and
Hazrat Mian Mir transformed the
—mortar and bricks gone into
its edification into flesh and
blood, the powerful magnetising
loadstone for humanity floating in
Aab-e-Hayyat that visit it all the
year round—365 days. It is a
hallowed place where music of
Allah's revelations spiritually
permeates millions of devotees,
sucking saturation from the clean
blue water of the holy Amritsar.
Its mystic impact has defied any

diminution on the psyche of those who came to pay homage here, all these four hundred years sans any geographical and colour distinctions.

It is personified *Shabd Brahma—Vag-Isha—Kalaam Allah—Logos—Word—Naam*, raised and drenched kneaded in Cosmic Energy by God-Oriented Souls whence *Primordial Vak* from its *Haranya garbha—Golden Womb—calls humanity to Sharvana—harking; Mannana—Reflection and Dhyana—Meditation to build a capacity to tread over Siraat-ul-Mustaqem—straight path—Triqat—to reach man's goal of not a simple mukti, liberation after death, but Jivan Mukti living liberation to enjoy the state of Sahw (Sufism) to serve selflessly—Nish Kama Karma—for any duration, at his or her choice.*

Guru Arjan Dev a peerless visionary forevisioned the need of future generations, non-parochially—*Sanjhi Sarb Johaanay*—"collectively common for all the worlds" and something real for integration of mind and body and a setu—bridge for different faiths.

The music, keertan, sama, bhajans that flow out of Hari Mandir's sanctum sanctorum reaching the spirit dried ears of the listeners convince them to believe that what the song is

doing with the audience outside would be really happening with the singers, keertanias inside—the sama' is the meridian of the divine power.

Sikh traditions speak that with a view to people and popularise the nascent town of Amritsar, after the daily services of reading the holy Scripture and keertan, were commenced in the Temple and Guru Arjan Dev had made his own residence in *Guru-Ke-Mahal—Guru's Palace—* raised by the Guru's father, Guru Ram Das, towards the western skirt of the town, he encouraged and practically gave impetus to all the classes of professionals and workers, said to be about seventy two, to build their living places or accommodations with suitable free financial and land grants from the Guru's treasury. Professionals of fine arts and valuable trades were settled in the close vicinity of the Temple and the Guru's residence. The latter, has now been turned into a nine-storey mansion in commemoration being the birth place of Guru Tegh Bahadur on 1st, April 1621 A.D., ninth Guru of the Sikh faith. This fact of wise and farsighted settlement is even now manifest after four centuries of the founding of the holy city. Though it is nowhere available in black and white but my presumptions and visible facts are that the following classes of

professionals and workers comprised original settlers under the Guru's divine care.

Pundits, Brahmins, Teachers, Writers, Astrologers; Drapers—cloth merchants—Bazzaz; Jewelers and goldsmiths; Booksellers—dealers in paper and stationary; Dealers in fancy goods etc.; Makers and sellers of household brass and bronze utensils; Dealers in *Paapat* and *Variaan* (a speciality of Amritsar reaching all corners of the world, wherever Punjabis live, even to this day); *Pansaris* and Grossers; Sweetmeat sellers; Dealers in sundry household necessities; Dealers in bamboo and bamboo ware; Hakeems-Vaids and Jarrahs; Rabbabis and Singers (Rabbabis were mostly Musalmaana—coming down from Bhai Mardaana's claim); Ivory Artists; Dealers in flowers, Dhupias; in harness wares for houses and bullocks; Dealers in Wheat, Rice, Daals, Rock salt Soap; Sugar, Shakkar, Misri, Gur, Ghee and steel—these trades had independent Mandis or Markets and even the localities therefor are still named after these commodities. Dealers in building materials; Timber Merchants; Maamaars—Raaj—Masons—Brick layers; Carpenters; Black Smiths; Sang Traash; Chittarkaars; Painters and Naqqash; Kirsans—Gujjars—Maalis; Washermen and Dyers; Weavers and Wool Carders;

Potters; Barbers; Shoemakers; Naqqaala; Suthras; Band Players; Aatish Baaz; Baazigars; Shikligars; etc. Workers of lower rung and professions who generally assisted in day to day execution of the above trades were smoothly settled in convenient localities.

The Sikh priests who served to the spiritual needs inside the Hari Mandir almost from 3-00 hours in the early morning to 22-00 hours, late in the evening, were class of their own, men of high esteem and reverence, known as Granthis, men in attendance on the sacred Granth—Holy Book were settled in *Boongas—quarters—adjacent to the Temple for convenient approach to their duty places.*

And in my deep moments
Of solitude and reflection,
I hark Guru Arjan
Calling in agony:
"I gave ye a Hari Mandir
Of peerless beauty and charm:
A Sar brimming with Amrit;
I gave ye a Holy Granth
Konz-ul-devotion and wisdom
But ye listen it nought
But ye read it nought,
Those who listen it,
Those who read it,
They understand it nought.
Those who understand it,
They follow it nought.
Sharvana — Mannana—Dhyana.
Ye totally unhear the Voice.



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